Peer-review report of

Stuart, J., Ward, C., Karl, J. A., & Musizvingoza, R. (2025). Intercultural contact in the digital age: A review of emerging research on digitally mediated acculturatoin. *advances.in/psychology, 2*, e299122. https://doi.org/10.56296/aip00036

Round 1

Dear Authors,

We are grateful for your submission of this significant work to our special issue, "Acculturation Reimagined." We had the privilege of receiving reviews from two long-standing experts in the field, with core competencies directly related to the topic of your manuscript. We extend our sincere gratitude to them for their comprehensive and insightful reviews. Prior to consulting their feedback, we both carefully read and thoroughly evaluated the paper ourselves.

While we all see a strong potential in your work, both the reviewers and we have various suggestions on how to further enhance the quality and impact of your manuscript. We invite you to address these points thoroughly in a revision. The reviewers have articulated their comments clearly, so we will not repeat them here. However, in addition to their valuable feedback, we kindly request that you address the following points in your revised submission:

We believe that your manuscript would greatly benefit from the addition of a section that integrates the three lines of research you have presented. This new section should identify general trends and, if possible, propose a model that encapsulates the concept of digitally mediated acculturation. We strongly encourage you to include a figure depicting this model, as it would serve as a valuable asset for generating hypotheses and informing the future directions section of your paper. In fact, you may even consider combining the model and future directions sections.

Relatedly and in line with the reviewers' feedback, we agree that the future directions section of your manuscript is currently quite brief and lacks specificity. We strongly recommend that you expand this section by identifying concrete avenues for (a) future research and (b) how mediated processes should inform acculturation theory and could be integrated into it. This is where the proposed model on digitally mediated acculturation, as mentioned in the previous point, could be particularly useful in guiding your discussion.

Additionally, we noticed that various new ideas, such as the role of social media in the acculturation of majority groups and the potential influence of artificial intelligence, are introduced in the conclusion. We believe that these ideas would be better served if they were discussed in greater detail within the future directions section. By elaborating on these concepts and their implications for future research, you can provide a more comprehensive and thought-provoking conclusion to your work.

Like the reviewers, we would like you to add more references throughout your paper, especially to support statements that might otherwise appear speculative. For instance, please provide a reference for the claim, "This has even been described as the 'annihilation of space' and the 'death of distance'."

Another example is the statement, "Social media can also be used as a tool for peacebuilding by countering extremism and misinformation, providing alternate points of view and providing real-time information and coverage of conflict events." This assertion requires references to support it. One relevant source you could consider citing is this article: https://doi.org/10.56296/aip00005.

You write, “Online communities that come together around media imbued with cultural content may have low essentialism, high heterogeneity, and high entitativity, effectively being characterised by high diversity and inclusivity but also having a strong sense of group identity.” Please elaborate on this. Why would one generally expect low essentialism? This degree of essentialism likely differs a lot between communities. There are examples of highly conservative communities in many societies.

In the abstract, it is better to simply refer to the paper as “narrative review” than a “study,” as the latter to many people suggests empirical work.

Generally, there were a lot of typos, missing words, extra words, and some incomplete sentences throughout. Here are a few examples:

There seems to be some typo or missing word in “Not only are digital technologies and the new media forms they have spawned transforming communication within and between cultures,…”

There is an extra word in this sentence and it should likely be “Smartphones’”: “Smartphones portability and ease of use of makes them especially advantageous

during times of crisis, as they are compact multifunctional tools that can be readily carried and utilised in various situations."

Here is an example of a missing word: "During resettlement, mobile phones continue to have a crucial for refugees, with two recent reviews of the research illustrating that they create opportunities for the development and maintenance of social capital, enable sociocultural adjustment (e.g., transport, banking, social services, and even dedicated resettlement apps), and provide access to information and resources (Alencar, 2020; Mancini et al., 2019)."

It is unclear what relationship (positive? negative?) you describe at the end of this sentence due to missing words: "In their research with migrant youth in Hong Kong, Lai and Cai (2023) found that social media interactions with strong ties (from both heritage and settlement cultural backgrounds) facilitated positive psychological adaptation, in contrast weak tie interaction with people from the mainstream culture was associated sociocultural adjustment."

We would like to express our sincere gratitude once again for your significant submission to our special issue. We firmly believe that your work has strong potential, but we also recognize that some substantial revisions and additions will help to fully realize its impact. With this in mind, we kindly invite you to submit a revised manuscript within one month, that is, by February 28th.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or require further guidance during the revision process. We are committed to working with you to ensure that your work makes a valuable contribution to the field of acculturation studies.

Thank you once again for considering our special issue as a platform to share your research. We eagerly await your revised submission.

Best,

Jonas R. Kunst & David L. Sam

Reviewer 1:

This manuscript made an interesting case for including digitally-mediated functioning into acculturation studies, providing a narrative review of three specific examples.

Overall, I found that the overarching argument was compelling. The manuscript was also fluid and well-written.

Below are a few comments aimed at improving this manuscript.

First, reading the first few pages, it took me a long time to figure out what the manuscript was attempting to achieve and what its specific goals were. The paragraph to that effect comes on p. 7, which is way too late in my opinion. It would be helpful to see clear signposts as to the manuscript's contribution and aims earlier on.

In a similar vein, I feel that the first few pages were repeating some arguments here and there. For example, some points in the section "digitally-mediated acculturation" on p. 5 felt like they had been brought up before. It would be helpful to revisit the first few pages with an eye on repetition ad concision.

Second, a main concern pertains to the justification of the three specific cases reviewed here. Why these three? Are they the most important ones to consider? The best documented? The most pressing? Is there a compelling theoretical reason or framework that informed the choice of these examples? As it stands, it felt like a somewhat arbitrary selection.

After finishing my reading, I conclude that this manuscript did not aim to address how acculturation research and theory should adapt to accommodate these three cases of digitally-mediated acculturation, nor digitally-mediated acculturation more broadly. Yet, throughout, I kept hoping for clear and concrete ideas as to what acculturation concepts/models/frameworks should change and how. To avoid this issue, I would suggest (1) making very clear what the scope of the manuscript is and what it is not, and (2) still provide a few suggestions or pointers a little more concrete that "acculturation research/theory should accommodate digitally-mediated functioning". As it stands, the review left me feeling hungry for more.

Finally, there was a tantalizing comment about the intertwining of online and offline acculturation towards the end of the manuscript. Here too, this seems like a very fruitful direction and I would have liked to see a few concrete pointers to chew on. Again, not everything can be achieved in a single manuscript, but a combination of crystal-clear delineation of scope combined with a few concrete avenues to ponder could help alleviate the feeling that I would have liked more meat on that otherwise compelling bone.

Reviewer 2:

I would like to thank the editor for the opportunity to read the manuscript entitled "Intercultural Contact in the Digital Age: A Review of Emerging Research on Digitally Mediated Acculturation". I enjoyed reading the authors' work, the manuscript is well written and easy to follow. I do have a number of suggestions for improvement, especially regarding the conceptualization of acculturation/adaptation, the definition of the scope of the review, and the integration of the different sections of the paper. Please find them below:

- The claim that no attempt has been made to synthesize research on digitally mediated acculturation is maybe too strongly worded. There is much research that combines acculturation research with digital media use, some of which is cited by the authors. I do agree that we can still advance towards better conceptual models of these constructs and how they can be integrated.

- The phrase 'digitally mediated acculturation' is a little misleading, because it would suggest that the process of acculturation is fully going through digital media, which is rarely the case. I would say digital media are one of the ways in which migrants/sojourners come into contact with different cultures, which helps them in their acculturation. So technically, acculturation can be partially mediated through digital means, but other means (e.g. face-to-face) remain important or even dominant in most cases.

- The section under the heading 'digitally mediated acculturation' (p5-7) needs to be better embedded in previous work. Many claims are made that are unsubstantiated by references.

- The authors chose three specific contexts in which digital media play a role in acculturation: refugees/asylum seekers, international students, diasporas. I agree these are the most researched groups in this subfield. However, can the authors justify why they chose these three, based on which kind of interpretations, and if there are any other contexts that are left out of the paper (and why?).

- When defining the concept of acculturation, are the authors focusing on a specific theoretical framework (Berry, 2005; Ward & Geeraert, 2016), or more on general individual experiences of moving abroad? It would help to be more clear about the distinction between acculturation and adaptation, and how they are defined differently.

- In the section on refugees/asylum seekers, the authors focus strongly on the different kinds of affordances that digital media (especially connectivity through smartphones) provide. However, they do not clearly outline how this relates to the acculturation literature.

- The section on international students appears to focus primarily on social media. What are the influences of other digital media (e.g. consuming news or

entertainment from different cultures)? This section made me realize that the authors did not fully conceptualize the scope of the concept of ‘digital media’ in their review.

- In the diaspora-section, both social media and other digital media appear to be mentioned, but the conceptualization is not fully clear to me. Maybe the authors can refer to other papers that examine media use of migrant groups in different contexts (Akpinar et al., 2025; e.g. Allison & Emmers-Sommer, 2011).

- Im happy that in the future research section, the authors also include different types of digital media, including news, entertainment, music etc. There is a substantial body of literature on the effects of consumption of these types of cultural products on intercultural attitudes (e.g. Kyriakidou, 2009; Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2017). It would be helpful if the authors could already explain the scope of their review earlier on, instead of only mentioning it here at the end.

- In general, I applaud the authors for bringing together three different bodies of literature related to media use and acculturation/adaptation of different groups of migrants/sojourners. However, the integration of these three discourses and their integration with the more established acculturation/adaptation literature could be made stronger. Doing so would lead to a more coherent paper that, I think, would be of added value for scholars in this field of study. In the introduction, the authors claim to work towards a new theoretical framework/model, but this is not really provided at the end.

Akpinar, M., Vandeberg, L., Vettehen, P. H., Hofhuis, J., & Hendriks, H. (2025). Examining acculturation in three generations of Turkish-Dutch citizens: The role of national identification, cultural values, language, and media use. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *105*, 102129. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2024.102129

Allison, M.-L., & Emmers-Sommer, T. M. (2011). Beyond individualism-collectivism and conflict style: Considering acculturation and media use. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, *40*(2), 135–152. https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2011.581033

Berry, J. W. (2005). Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *29*(6), 697–712.

Kyriakidou, M. (2009). Imagining Ourselves Beyond the Nation? Exploring Cosmopolitanism in Relation to Media Coverage of Distant Suffering. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, *9*(3), 481–496. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9469.2009.01062.x

Reysen, S., & Katzarska-Miller, I. (2017). Media, Family, and Friends: Normative Environment and Global Citizenship Identification. *Journal of International and Global Studies*, *9*(1). https://doi.org/10.62608/2158-0669.1368

Ward, C., & Geeraert, N. (2016). Advancing acculturation theory and research: The acculturation process in its ecological context. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *8*, 98–104. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.021

Round 2

Dear Authors,

Thank you for attending thoroughly with the reviews provided. Both Reviewers now recommend accepting the paper. We also believe that the paper has significantly improved and can now be accepted for publication in the special issue. Congrats on a fine contribution to the field.

Best,

Jonas R. Kunst & David L. Sam

Reviewer 1:

I would like to thank the authors for their careful revision and responses to our previous comments. I feel that the manuscript has much improved. Especially the new sections on future research directions are interesting and relevant. I have no further comments at this stage.

Reviewer 2:

Thank you for this revised version, which comprehensively addressed my comments. I find the manuscript much clearer and focused. I particularly liked the section on future directions. I do not have any additional substantive comments.

Just a small detail: on page 10, there is mention of “ICTs” but this acronym has not (to my knowledge) been defined before.